

THE MULTIPLE AUDIENCES PROBLEM IN CONSTRUCTING EFFECTIVE SYNTHESES OF SCIENTIFIC INFORMATION FOR PURPOSES OF INFLUENCING PUBLIC POLICY

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THE COMMUNICATION ENVIRONMENT FOR POLICYMAKING ON CLIMATE CHANGE

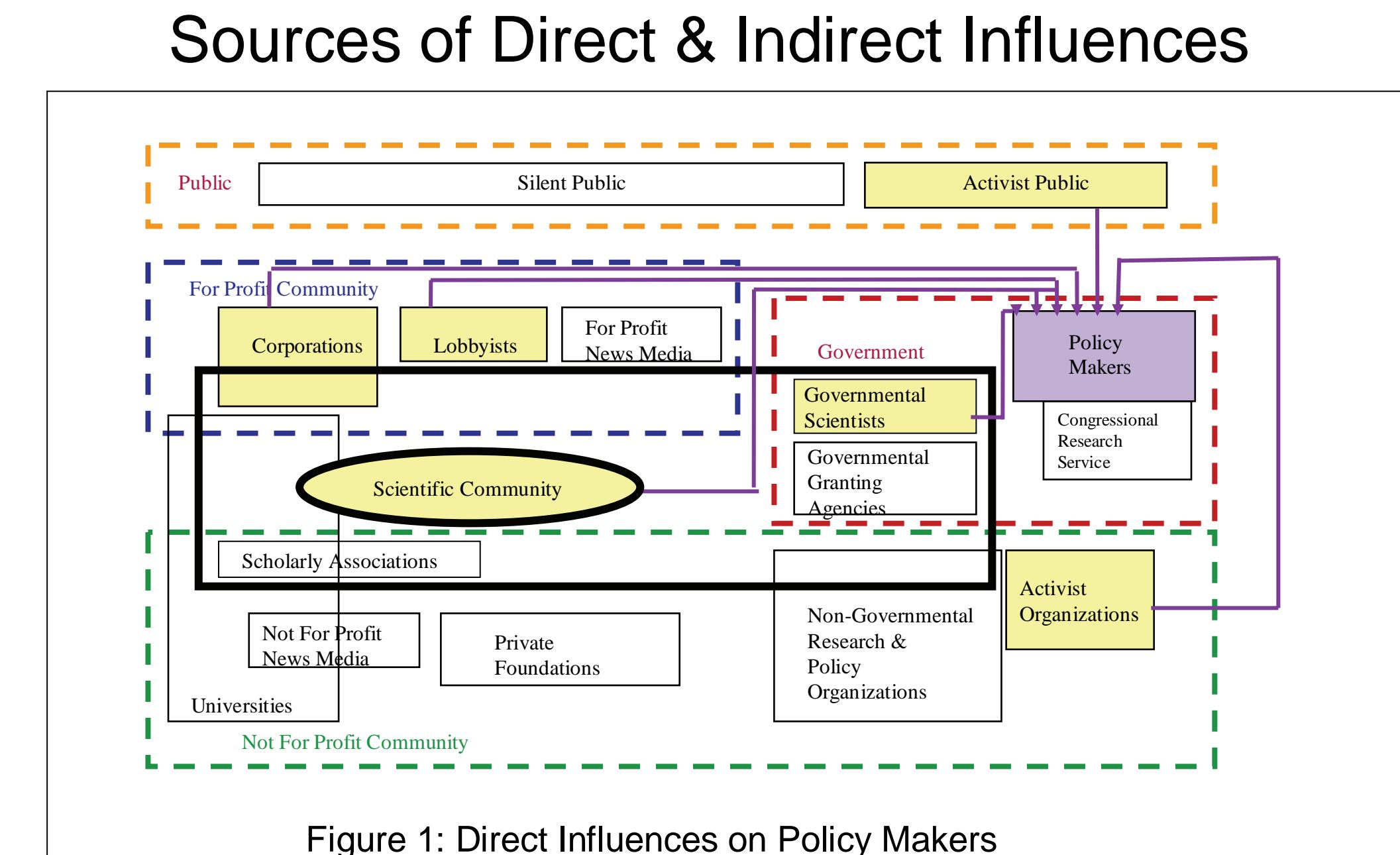


Figure 1: Direct Influences on Policy Makers

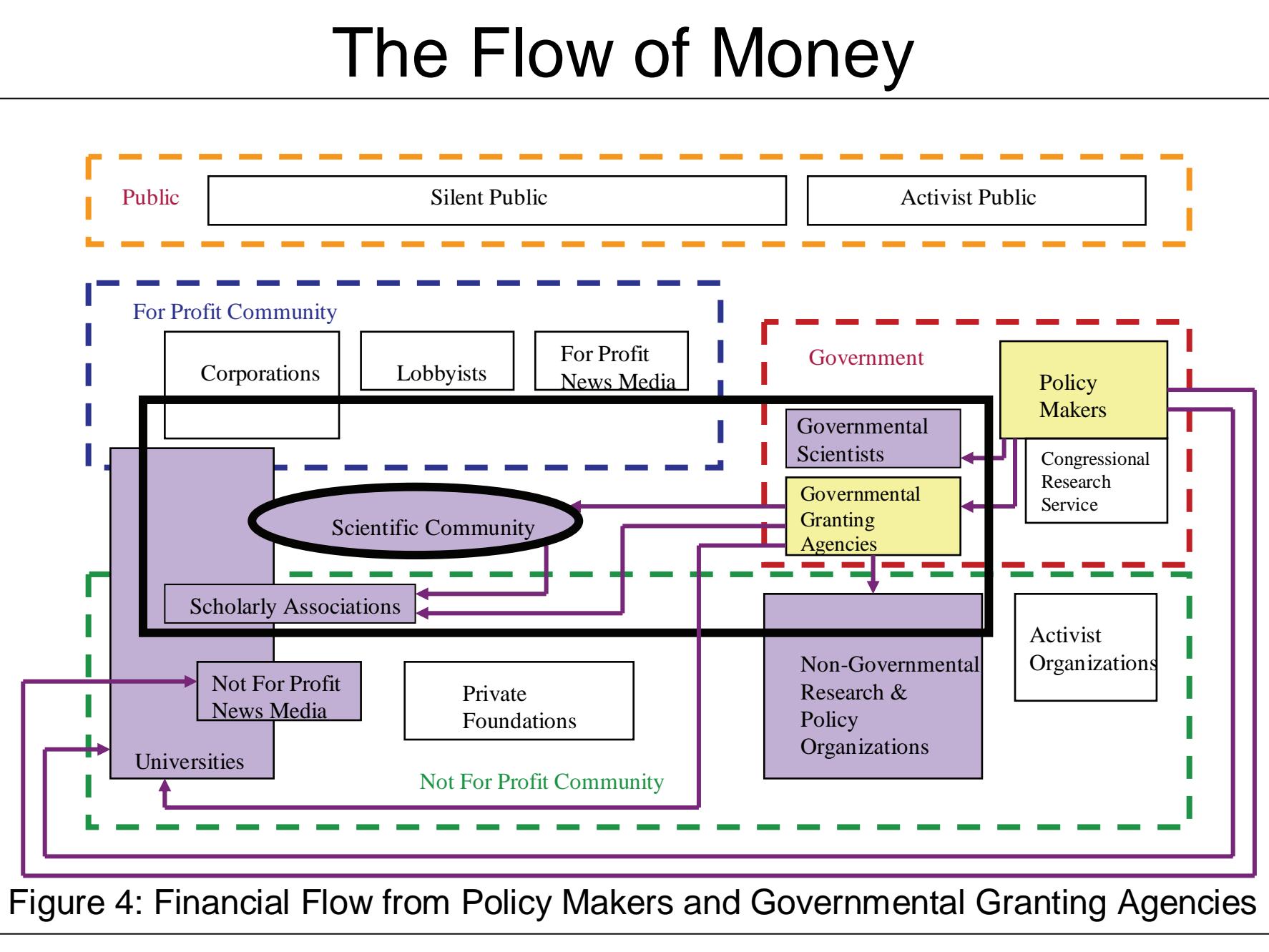


Figure 4: Financial Flow from Policy Makers and Governmental Granting Agencies

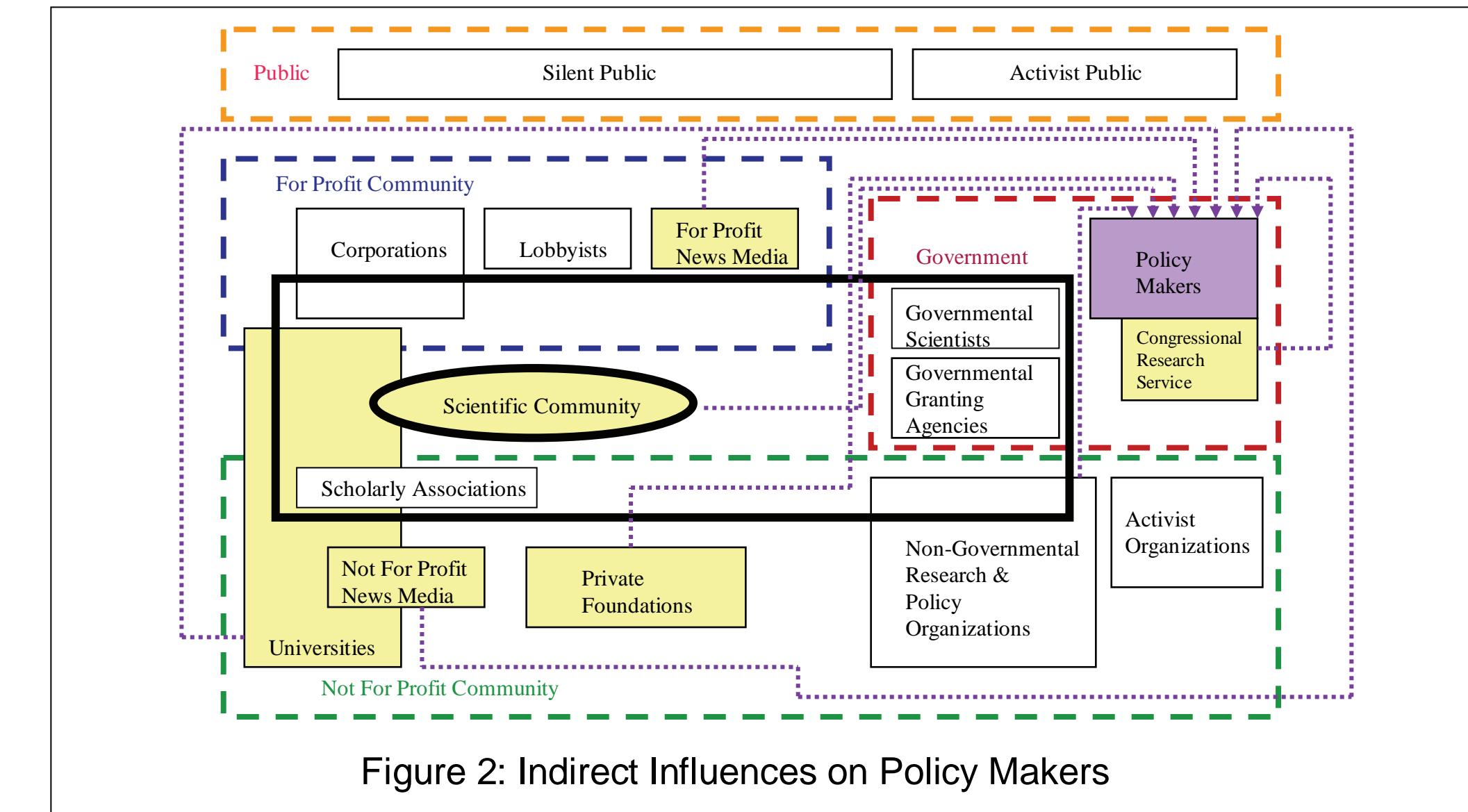


Figure 2: Indirect Influences on Policy Makers

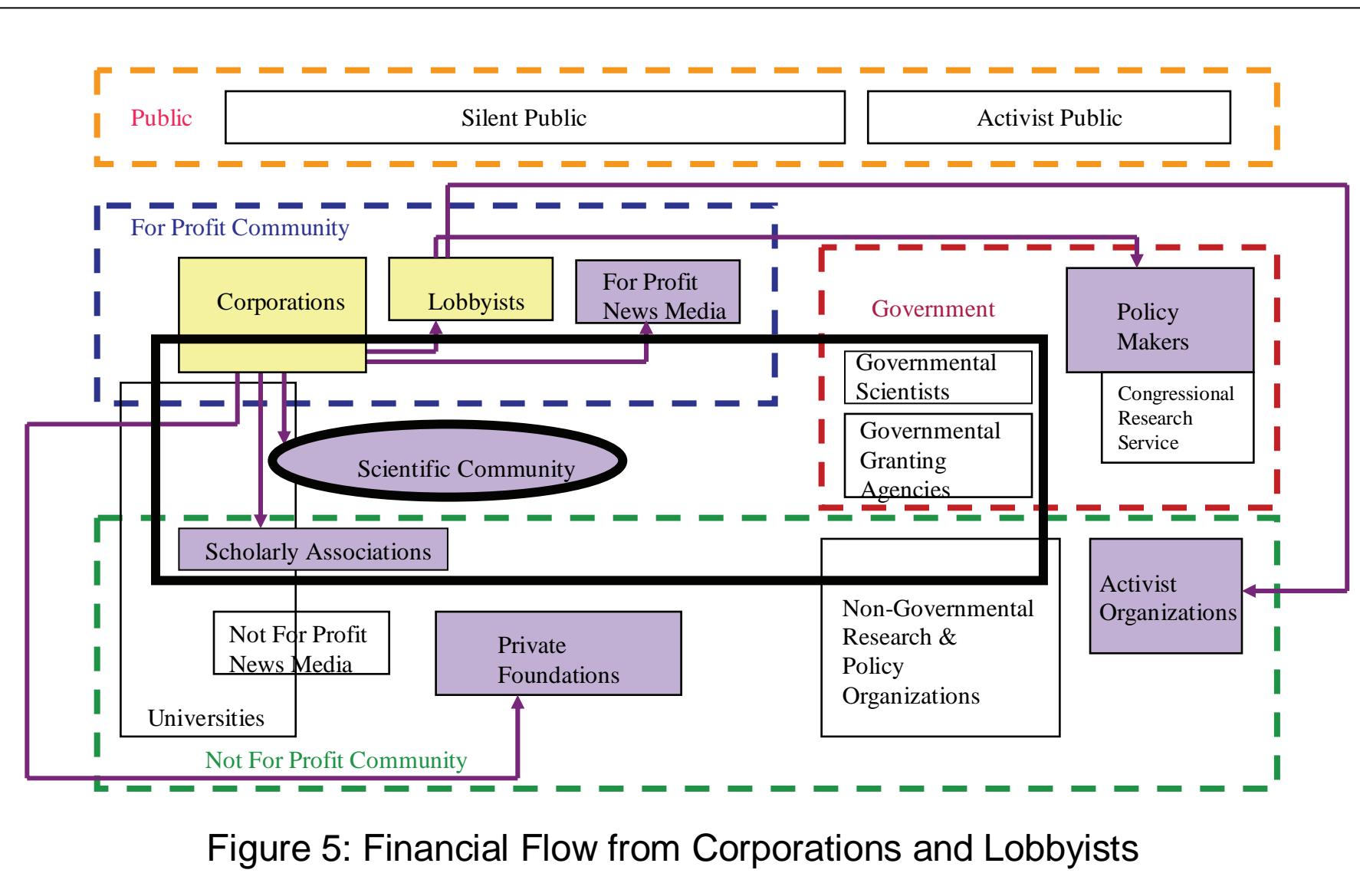


Figure 5: Financial Flow from Corporations and Lobbyists

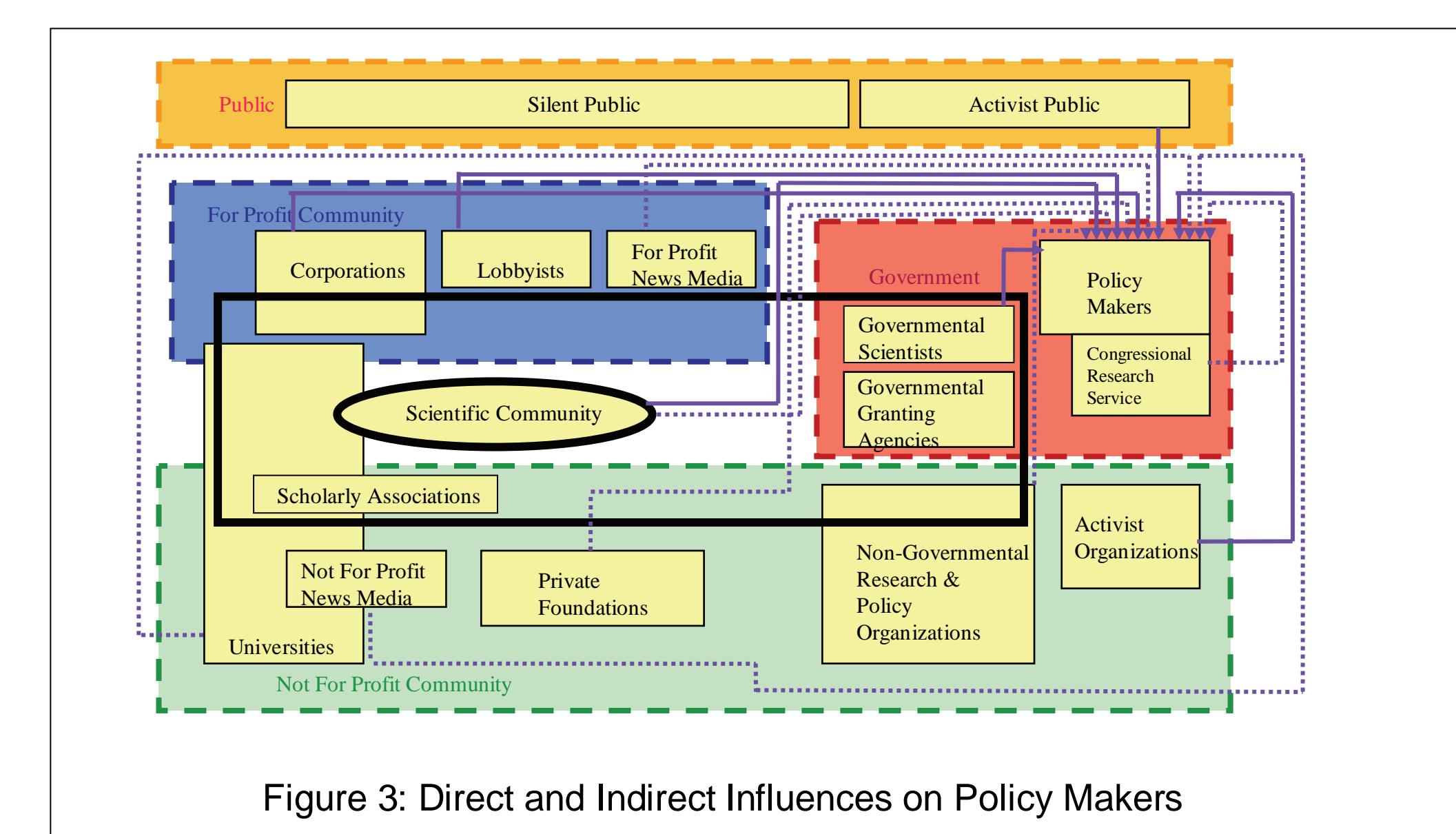


Figure 3: Direct and Indirect Influences on Policy Makers

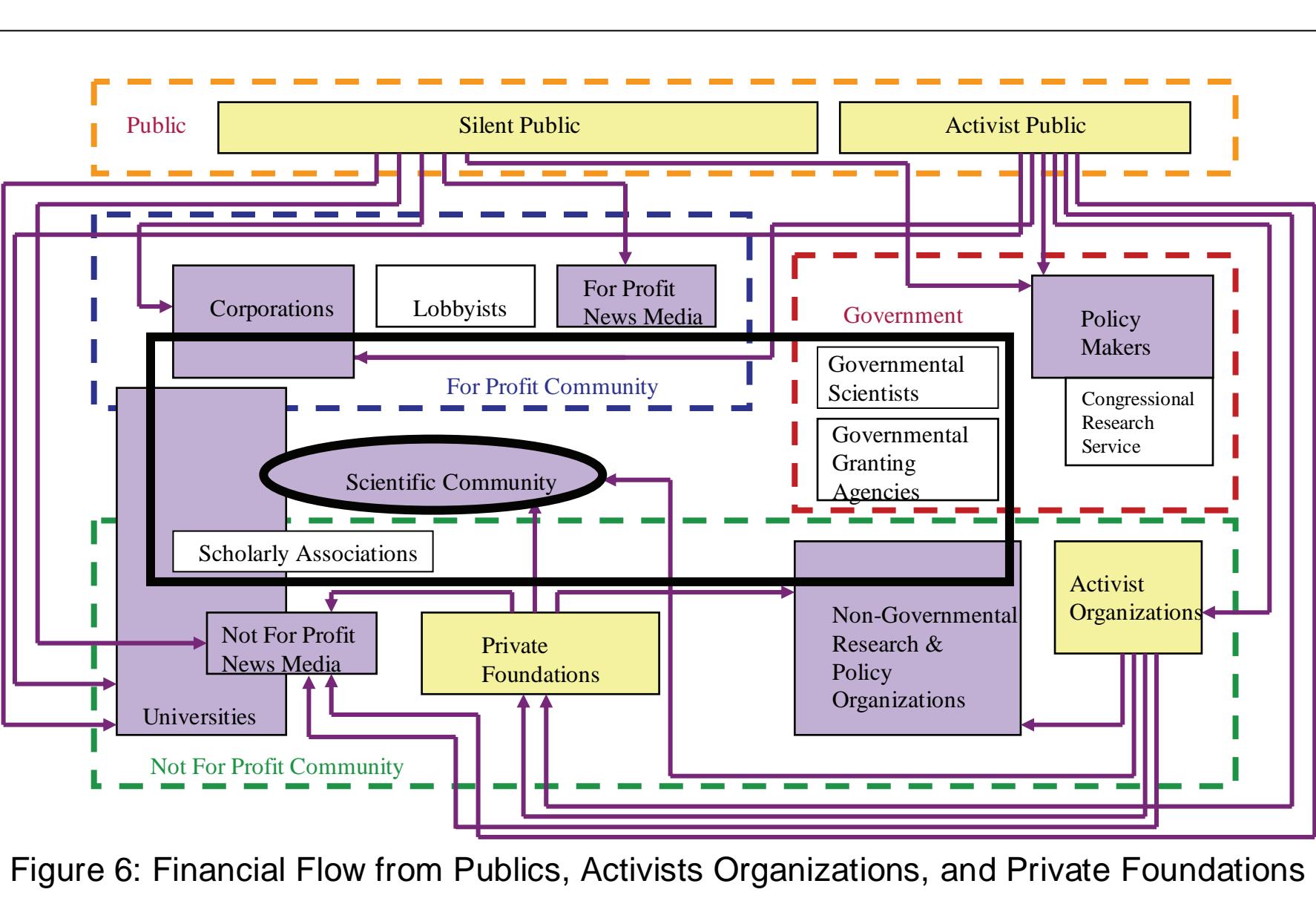


Figure 6: Financial Flow from Publics, Activist Organizations, and Private Foundations

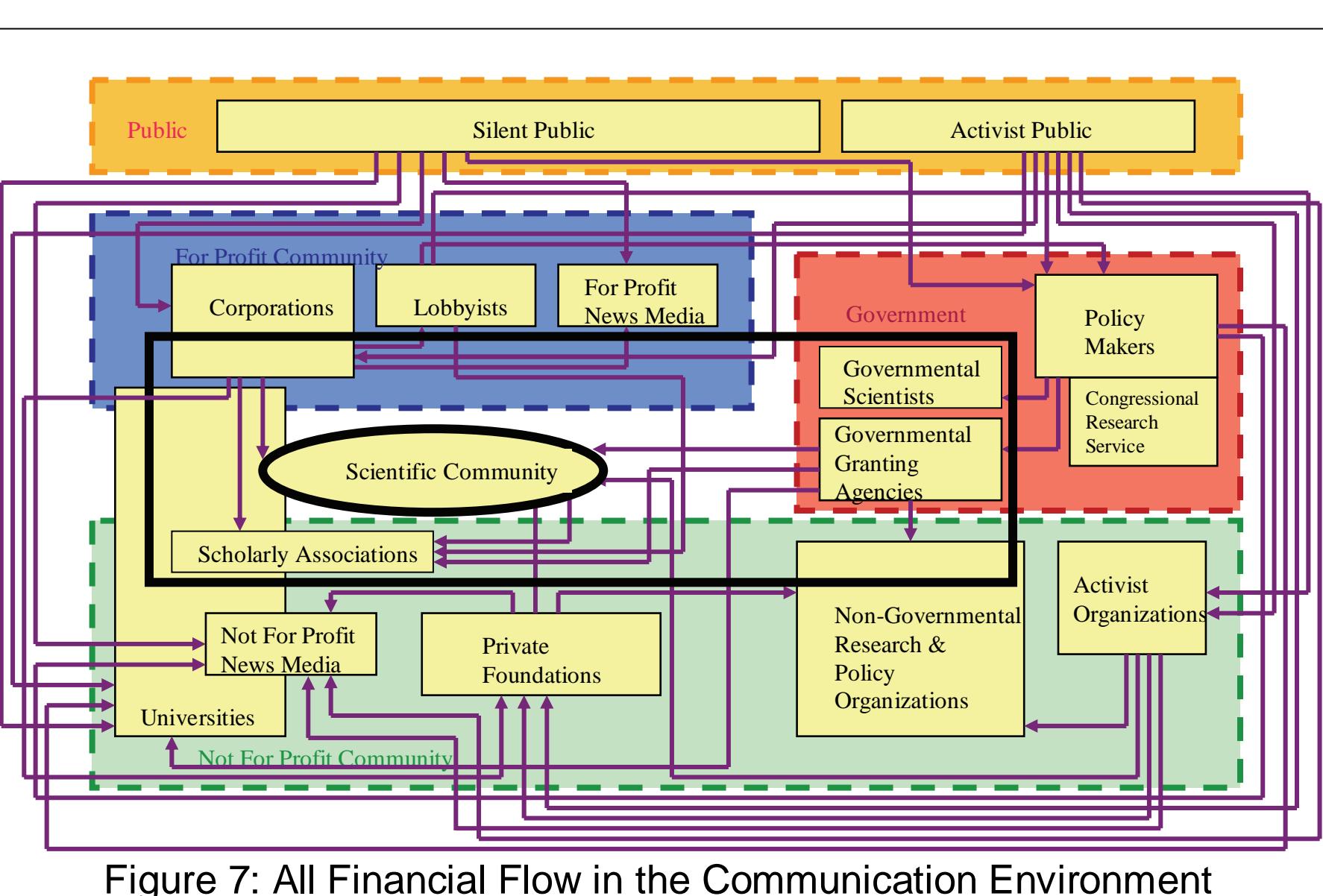


Figure 7: All Financial Flow in the Communication Environment

CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

CONCLUSIONS

- ❖ Policymaking in science is both a scientific and a political enterprise. The communication environment for such policymaking is complex and is influenced by potential conflict between scientific information and political exigency.
- ❖ Policymakers receive information from multiple sources regarding global climate change. The information that receives the most attention is that which comes from (a) credible sources, (b) sources that share the policymaker's biases, or (c) sources that support the policymaker's political agenda.
- ❖ For policymakers, the most credible sources are those with established track records. Thus, they rely heavily on the Congressional Research Service and on well-established Non-governmental Research and Policy Organizations (e.g., Brookings Institution, Heritage Foundation, Cato Institute, Rand Corporation).
- ❖ The ability to make political contributions allows some entities (e.g., corporations, lobbyists) to have more access to policymakers than other entities. These entities could, if desired, dispute portions of the scientific consensus and have their concerns considered carefully.
- ❖ The strongest scientific consensus, from a policymaking viewpoint, should be the one that provokes the fewest credible competing alternatives.
- ❖ Because there are multiple sources that have the potential to produce credible competing syntheses of scientific information, these sources become "audiences" for the sorts of synthesis products that CCSP aims to produce. To ensure the viability of its final products, CCSP must convince these audiences of the integrity of its reports.
- ❖ News media have the capability to "set agendas" for public discussion, based on what they choose to cover and how they frame the coverage. Not-for-profit news media, in particular, have formats that allow them to cover complex stories in depth. News media have the unique capability of reaching all of the audiences in the communication environment for scientific policymaking.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- ❖ CCSP needs to reduce the potential for criticism of its synthesis products and to avoid the potential for the creation of competing products. To do so, its review process needs representation from those elements of the communication environment that are in a position to be critics or competitors.
- ❖ CCSP should include in its review process representatives from Non-Governmental Research & Policy Organizations and Private Foundations.
- ❖ CCSP should regularly inform interested lobbyists and activist organizations of the progress being made in the construction and review of its synthesis products.
- ❖ CCSP should insure that the Congressional Research Service is kept up to date regarding the substance of progress toward the production of the planned synthesis products.
- ❖ CCSP should invite media news coverage of the process of creating its synthesis products, in addition to welcoming coverage of the synthesis products themselves. Particularly, the not-for-profit news media should be solicited for extended and ongoing coverage.
- ❖ The scientific community should acknowledge that syntheses of scholarly findings are both scholarly and political documents and should ensure that potential political criticisms of the CCSP synthesis products are anticipated and responded to in the text of those reports.